

UAAC FAMILY NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2009

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IT'S ALMOST THANKSGIVING

It's hard to believe your student is half way through their first semester of college and soon will be coming home for the Thanksgiving break. Be forewarned that the student returning to your home very likely will be different in many ways from the student who left your home in August to come to Virginia Tech. Because of this, you should not expect that your son or daughter will simply slip into the family rules and routines they had while still in high school.

Before your student comes home, talk about your expectations regarding curfews, the use of the family car, and house

rules. Your student will probably want to spend a lot of time with their high school friends, but while they are home lay claim to some of your student's time to give your family the opportunity to catch up and reconnect.

Tune in to the anxieties and complaints your student expresses. Offer suggestions for coping with "impossible" classes, unsatisfactory mid-terms, researching majors, or for dealing with exceptionally high levels of stress. In offering suggestions, you are empowering your student to handle their problems and to live with the choices they make or not make.

Have a wonderful time with your student during the Thanksgiving break, but remember to set your expectations prior to their arrival. Communication is the key.

Enjoy the homecoming!



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BUS SHUTTLE TO ROANOKE AIRPORT FROM CAMPUS

Did you know that that an express shuttle will be provided from Virginia Tech for students needing to get to the Roanoke Regional Airport? The Smart Way bus will provide this express shuttle service non-stop from Squires Student Center to the Roanoke Regional Airport, in addition to their regularly scheduled routes on Friday, November 20 and Saturday, November 21.

If your student is interested in this service, they MUST register by November 6. If they do not do so by the deadline, they will not be able to ride the express shuttle. Students can register at <https://survey.vt.edu/survey/entry.jsp?id=1254163837563>

Departure times for both Friday, Nov. 20 and Saturday, Nov. 21 are 6:15 a.m., 8:15 a.m., 10:15 a.m., 1:15 p.m., and 3:15 p.m.

from the Smart Way bus stop at Squires Student Center.

For further information regarding the shuttle service, please visit the following website: <http://www.facilities.vt.edu/tcs/alternative/thanksgiving09.asp>

(Adapted from Alternative Transportation for Thanksgiving 2009 website)

QUESTIONS YOUR STUDENT MAY ASK

This month students have adjusted to the college environment, but many are still finding their way. Many of the questions they ask themselves this month are associated with choosing a major or procedural issues:

- Why does everyone have a major except me?

Answer: Your student does have a major, University Studies. (See article on this month's academic resource).

- Should I change the major I thought I wanted to pursue?
- **Answer:** Ask your student why they wish to change their intended major and have they learned about that major or others. Have your students share their concerns with their academic advisor before making a final decision on majors.

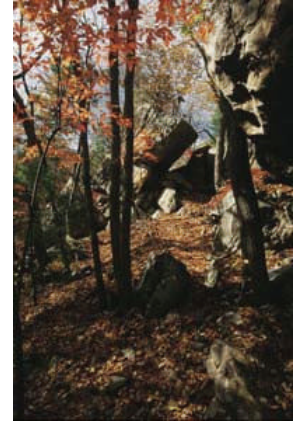
- How do I know when my final exams are?

Answer: This information is

found on the student's syllabi for his/her classes and the Fall 2009 Timetable found on Hokie SPA.

- Should I use the Course Withdrawal?

Answer: Your student should speak with their academic advisor to discuss their academic performance and to learn what the Course Withdrawal is and how it works. Their advisor will also discuss the advantages and challenges of using the course withdrawal.



MID-TERM GRADES

Mid-term grades for first semester freshmen were made available to students in October. Students received one of three grades: a "S+", a "U", or an "NR". An "S+" grade means your student has earned a "C" or better grade for the course thus far. A "U" grade does not mean your student is failing a course. A "U" grade means a "C-" or below has

been earned. If your student received an "NR" grade this means the instructor had not reported a grade for the course.

Studies have shown that a student with two or more unsatisfactory grades stands a higher risk of being placed on academic probation at the end of the semester than those who do not.

Because of this, University Studies academic advisors have contacted their first semester students to meet with them to discuss their academic performance to provide resources the student may need. Please encourage your student to meet with his or her advisor. She will discuss resources available to aid in your student's academic success.

"It is what we think we know already that often prevents us from learning."
Claude Bernard,
French
Psychologist
1813-1878

HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

- Refer your student to their UAAC academic advisor if their mid-term grades show two or more "U" grades, but also feel free to discuss all unsatisfactory grades and offer your support.
- If your student needs additional academic support in the area of tutoring or academic skills development, refer them to the Center for Academic Enrichment and Excellence. (IT'S FREE)!! Your student can visit their website at www.caee.vt.edu or call 231-5499 to make an appointment
- Continue to encourage your student to attend a departmental information session to learn more about potential majors. This information regarding these sessions are emailed directly to your student.
- With the added stress your student may be experiencing, encourage him/her to be involved in positive, healthy behaviors such as exercising and having a proper diet.



STUDENT RESOURCE: SMITH CAREER CENTER

Many students do not think of utilizing a very important resource available to them in their search for a major. This resource is the Smith Career Center. Thinking the services are for college juniors and seniors, many first year students are not aware of how a career services office can help them. Career Services advisors can help your first year student with self-assessments which allow your student to consider his/her interests, skills, values, and personality to see how they fit and match with careers. The process also helps them determine career options and choose a major to get them there.

Career Services also has a wide variety of tools and resources students can use to

help them explore careers and majors such as the Guide to Undergraduate Majors at Virginia Tech and the Career Services Resource Center. The Guide provides an overview of each major offered at Virginia Tech, some of the entry-level career options associated with each of these majors, contact information for each major's career advisor, and basic skills the student will achieve in the major. The Resource Center has a wide variety of books and tools to help students match the major they are thinking about with the careers and possibilities they could have.

If your student would like a course targeted at exploring careers, the Smith Career Center has a course for that.

Students with at least 15 hours of Virginia Tech credit completed can enroll in an Exploring Careers: UNIV 2004 course, making it a good course for the spring semester. After successful completion of this course, a student will have the skills necessary to assess and identify their interests, skills, values, and other related personal attributes and develop an understanding of their relationship to career choices and develop short- and long-term educational, occupational, and personal goals.

The Center is an excellent resource for all students at Virginia Tech. For more information about The Smith Career Center at Virginia Tech visit www.career.vt.edu



Smith Career Center

NOVEMBER DEADLINES

- November 2 Students wanting to change into the English major, should schedule an appointment with Dr. Cathy Skinner in 329 Shanks between Nov. 2-13
- November 13 Elementary Education Information Session, 301 War Memorial Hall, 3:30 pm - 4:30 pm. RSVP required to Mary Parish at phd4mwp@vt.edu. If your student wants to be an elementary school teacher, please encourage him/her to attend this important session. If no one has indicated that they wish to attend this session will be canceled
- November 20 Deadline for students to request rescheduling of final examinations that conflict or if they have a third exam in 24 hours
- November 22 Thanksgiving holiday begins and residence halls close at noon
- November 29 Thanksgiving holiday break ends
- November 30 Department of Communication Information Session, 5:30 pm, 043 Shanks Hall (in the basement).
- November 30 Opening of drop/add

“Destiny is not a matter of chance; it is a matter of choice.” Anon

